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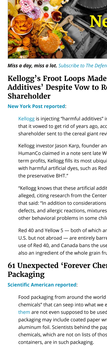
Kellogg's Froot Loops Made With 'Harmful Additives' Despite Vow to Remove Dyes: Shareholder + More

The Defender's Big Food NewsWatch posts the latest headlines related to industrial food companies and their products, including ultra-processed foods, food additives, contaminants, GMOs and lab-grown meat and their toxic effects on human health. The views expressed in the excerpts from other news sources do not necessarily reflect the views of The Defender.

By The Defender Staff



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Kellogg's Froot Loops Made With 'Harmful Additives' Despite Vow to Remove Dyes: Shareholder

New York Post reported:

Kellogg is rejecting "harmful additives" in its Froot Loops sold in America that it vowed to get rid of years ago, according to an explosive letter a shareholder sent to the cereal giant reviewed by Fox News.

Kellogg investor Jason Karp, founder and chief of healthy foods company HumanCo claimed in a note sent late Wednesday that "in pursuit of short-term profits, Kellogg fills its most ubiquitous cereal products in the U.S. ... with harmful artificial dyes, such as Red 40, Yellow 5 and Blue 1, as well as the preservative BHT."

"Kellogg knows that these artificial additives can harm children," Karp alleged, citing research from the Center for Science in the Public Interest that said: "In addition to considerations of organ damage, cancer, birth defects, and allergic reactions, mixtures of dyes ... cause hyperactivity and other behavioral problems in some children."

Red 40 and Yellow 5 — both of which are used to make Froot Loops in the U.S. but not abroad — are entirely banned in the EU. Australia also forbids the use of Red 40, and Canada bans the use of the BHT preservative, which is also an ingredient in the whole grain Froot Loops in the U.S.

61 Unexpected 'Forever Chemicals' Found in Food Packaging

Scientific American reported:

Food packaging from around the world contains at least 68 "forever chemicals" that can seep into what we eat, a new study finds. And 61 of them are not even supposed to be used in such products. This kind of packaging may include coated paper wrappers, plastic containers and aluminum foil. Scientists tested more than 400 samples and found the latest chemicals, which are not on lists of those authorized for use in food containers, are in such packaging.

The study, published on Tuesday in Environmental Science & Technology, focused on a class of chemicals called perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFASs). For decades, these substances have been used in a wide range of consumer products, from cookware to pesticides to cosmetics, because of their ability to repel water and grease.

PFASs are sometimes called "forever chemicals" because they don't break down readily in the environment or in the body. That's because their characteristic carbon-fluorine bond — part of what makes them so useful in the first place — is one of the strongest in nature. PFASs have been found in human blood and breast milk, drinking water, soil and other startling places around the world.

The paper adds to recently growing concerns about the prevalence of PFASs — and about an overall dearth of knowledge as to what chemicals are found in many everyday products. "Food packaging may not be the only way we are exposed to PFAS, but food packaging could contribute" to these exposures, says the study's senior author Birgit Geueke, a senior scientific officer at the nonprofit Food Packaging Forum Foundation in Zurich.

Diet Drinks May Boost Risk of Dangerous Heart Condition by 20%, Study Says

CNN Health reported:

Drinking two liters or more per week of artificially sweetened beverages — the equivalent of a medium-sized fast-food diet soda a day — raised the risk of an irregular heartbeat called atrial fibrillation by 20% when compared to people who drank none, a new study found.

Known as A-fib, atrial fibrillation is an irregular heartbeat often described by many people who have it as a "quiver," "flutter" or "flip-flop" of the heart in the chest.

Drinking a similar number of added-sugar beverages raised the risk of the condition by 10% while drinking about four ounces of pure, unsweetened juices, such as orange or vegetable juice, was associated with an 8% lower risk of atrial fibrillation, the study found.

While the study could only show an association between sweetened drinks and A-fib, the relationship remained after accounting for any genetic susceptibility to the condition. A 2017 study found people with European ancestry had about a 22% risk of inheriting it.

Household Foods Get Less Healthy as Babies Age Into Toddlers

U.S. News & World Report reported:

Over the first few years of a child's life, foods found in a family's fridge and cupboards tend to get less healthy, new research shows.

"We found significant changes in every food categories over time," said study lead author Jennifer Barton. "Food items such as non-whole grains, processed meats, savory snacks, candy and microwaveable or quick-cook foods were more commonly available in the home at 48 months [of age] compared to 24 and 36 months."

The study, which tracked foods in the homes of 468 mother-child pairs in Illinois, was published recently in the journal Public Health Nutrition.

The study found that between the ages of 2 and 4, the overall obesogenic score of foods in the average child's home went up. There were more cookies, chips, candy, processed meats, microwaved foods and other such fare available to kids as time went on.

Iowa Bill Would Create Legal Immunity for Pesticide Manufacturers

Sioux City Journal reported:

Iowa Senate lawmakers advanced, for the second time, a bill that would protect chemical manufacturers from lawsuits over failure to warn consumers about potential adverse health effects. The bill, Senate Study Bill 3188, was supported by Bayer, the manufacturer of the glyphosate-based herbicide Roundup. Bayer has been hit by lawsuits from individuals claiming it failed to warn consumers of the potential health risks of Roundup.

The company has won some lawsuits against individuals alleging Roundup caused their cancer, but in other cases it has been found liable. Bayer spent more than $10 billion settling most pending claims in 2020.

Under the bill, pesticide manufacturers could not be held liable for failing to warn consumers about adverse health effects in a way that exceeds the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency labeling requirements. The bill stipulates that the immunity would not apply to Chinese state-owned companies, singling out the massive agriculture and chemical company Syngenta.

Lobbyists for Bayer and major farm groups supported the bill and told lawmakers on Monday it would prevent unfounded lawsuits against the company that creates a vital tool for farmers.

2024's 'Dirty Dozen': The 12 Fruits and Vegetables With the Most Pesticides — and Tips for Enjoying Them Safely

CNBC reported:

Fruits and vegetables are key components of a healthy diet, but it is just as important that they're safe to eat — meaning clean of dirt, grime and pesticides.

Each year since 2004, the Environmental Working Group, a nonprofit organization that aims to make the environment healthier, ranks the non-organic produce with the most pesticides that they call The Dirty Dozen. The EWG analyzes data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration.

"This year, EWG determined that 75% of all conventional fresh produce sampled had residues of potentially harmful pesticides," according to the EWG. "But for items on the Dirty Dozen, a whopping 95% of samples contain pesticides."

Strawberries and spinach claimed the top two spots again on this year's list at No. 1 and No. 2 respectively. And grapes jumped from No. 8 on the list in 2023 all the way up to No. 4 in 2024.

Proposal Would Exempt Agricultural Pesticides From Law Banning Forever Chemicals

Portland Press Herald reported:

A proposal before the Maine Legislature would exempt agricultural pesticides from reporting requirements and a ban on products containing forever chemicals by 2030.

Supporters of the proposal acknowledged during a public hearing Monday that forever chemicals, the per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances known as PFAS, are a problem but said the farming industry needs more time to figure out solutions.

Opponents raised concerns about pesticides containing PFAS contributing to food contamination and said the current ban is reasonable, providing sufficient time for manufacturers to develop alternatives or apply for an exemption.

PFAS are called forever chemicals because they linger in the environment for decades. Even trace amounts of these synthetic chemicals are linked to compromised immune systems, low birth weights and several types of cancer.

Why Is Toddler Milk so Popular? Follow the Money

The Conversation reported:

Toddler milk is popular and becoming more so. Just over a third of Australian toddlers drink it. Parents spend hundreds of millions of dollars on it globally. Around the world, toddler milk makes up nearly half of total formula milk sales, with a 200% growth since 2005. Growth is expected to continue.

We're concerned about the growing popularity of toddler milk — about its nutritional content, cost, how it's marketed, and about the impact on the health and feeding of young children. Some of us voiced our concerns on the ABC's 7.30 program recently.

But what's in toddler milk? How does it compare to cow's milk? How did it become so popular? Toddler milk is marketed as appropriate for children aged one-and-a-half years. This ultra-processed food contains: skim milk powder (cow, soy or goat), vegetable oil, sugars (including added sugars), emulsifiers (to help bind the ingredients and improve the texture), added vitamins and minerals.

Toddler milk is also up to four to five times more expensive than regular cow's milk. "Premium" toddler milk (the same product, with higher levels of vitamins and minerals) is more expensive.

Amazon Founder Jeff Bezos Invests in Sustainable Protein Initiative

ESM reported:

The Bezos Earth Fund, established by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, has announced the establishment of Bezos Centers for Sustainable Protein, as part of its commitment to food transformation.

Some $60 million (€55.1 million) will be invested on an initial basis, as part of a broader $1 billion commitment by the Fund to transform the world's food systems.

The Centers, the location of which has not yet been revealed, will seek to reduce costs, increase quality and boost the nutritional benefit of alternative proteins through the use of science and technology, the Fund said in a statement.

Currently, the production, at scale, of sustainable protein products, whether plant-based, fermented, or cultivated, incurs high costs, with the resulting products often of limited quality, it added.

Debate Over Ultra-Processed Foods Spurs 'Reevaluation of Health Perceptions'

ESM reported:

Brands will need to invest in food technology in order to overcome the negative association with ultra-processed foods (UPFs), while still being able to deliver on sensory enjoyment and price, GlobalData has said.

Hannah Cleland, consumer analyst at GlobalData, was commenting on the ongoing debate around UPFs, their effects, and whether they align with optimal dietary practices.

As she noted, completely abstaining from UPFs will be challenging, given their domination in various grocery categories — plus, certain segments, such as bread and fortified products, offer essential nutrients. As a result, brands should focus on UPFs that offer legitimate health advantages.

"Given the pervasive nature of UPFs, the most logical approach for brands tackling the UPF issue is to prioritize certain categories. One of the biggest areas for reformulation and repositioning will be plant-based alternatives," Cleland said.

The plant-based sector in particular finds itself in 'limbo', GlobalData suggests, with consumers challenging the notion that these alternatives are genuinely healthier.

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